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everywhere by unobtrusive allusions how rich he was in modern culture, it has the highest charm of gentlemanly conversation. And it was natural to him,—his early works (“The Great Hoggarty Diamond,” for example) being as perfect, as low in tone, as the latest. He was in all respects the most finished example we have of what is called a man of the world. In the pardonable eulogies which were uttered in the fresh grief at his loss there was a tendency to set him too high. He was even ranked above Fielding,—a position which no one would have been so eager in disclaiming as himself. No, let us leave the old fames on their pedestals. Fielding is the greatest creative artist who has written in English since Shakespeare. Of a broader and deeper nature, of a larger brain than Thackeray, his theme is *Man*, as that of the latter is *Society*. The Englishman with whom Thackeray had most in common was Richard Steele, as these “Roundabout Papers” show plainly enough. He admired Fielding, but he loved Steele.

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20. — 1. *Chaucer's Legende of Goode Women*. Edited, with an Introduction and Notes, Glossarial and Critical, by HIRAM CORSON. Philadelphia: Frederick Leypoldt. 1864. 12mo. pp. xxxviii., 145.
2. *Observations on the Language of Chaucer*. By FRANCIS JAMES CHILD, Professor in Harvard College. From the Memoirs of the American Academy, New Series, Vol. VIII. Cambridge: Welch, Bigelow, and Company. 1862. 4to. pp. 107.

FOR two centuries after his death, Chaucer was honored not merely as the first in point of time of English poets, but the first in rank also. Thenceforward he became more and more a tradition, a name which poets invoked as they did the Muse, and with very much the same sincerity and right of acquaintance. Dryden, with his sterling English sense, and really admirable critical sagacity, had a feeling of his worth, and modernized a few of his poems, as a bookseller's job. Pope tried his hand at one or two more, with an unhappy lubricity choosing mostly such poems as had acquired a taint of uncleanness by the change of manners, though in Chaucer's day they but expressed the honest frankness of the time. Between 1687 and 1777 there was but one edition of Chaucer's works, and he was in the apogee of his fame when Tyrwhitt (1775–78) published his text of the *Canterbury Tales*. From that time forth, his credit has been on the rise, till he has at length assumed his true place, as second only to that English poet to whom all other poets are second.

Various attempts have been made to translate Chaucer, but they have all failed, and all deserved to fail, though Wordsworth, Leigh

Hunt, and Browning assisted in the volume published in 1841. Poetry that has any real principle of life in it, as Cervantes long ago discovered, is incapable of being transfused into another language. Of late, the study of Chaucer in the original has come into vogue, and Mr. Corson deserves the thanks of all lovers of what is genuine in literature for the taste with which he has made his selection, and the care with which he has edited it. The "Legend of Good Women," though it does not do justice to the range of Chaucer as a poet, is entirely adequate as an introduction to the study of his language, which was the object Mr. Corson had in view. In a well-written Preface, he shows a loving appreciation of his author, (though he gives up a little too much space to Mrs. Browning's fine writing,) and his notes show taste and scholarship. But his little volume, good as it is, would have been more nearly perfect, and he would have avoided some mistakes (like that on page xxviii., where he says that the final *e* in Chaucer is always silent before words beginning with a vowel, which is not true either of the French or Italian poets on whom Chaucer modelled his verse) if he had profited by the admirable monograph of Professor Child, the title of which we have given at the head of this notice.

Professor Child was already known by his *Collection of English Ballads*, in which the taste shown in selection was more than equalled by a scholarship in illustration so accurate and exhaustive that we are fain to call it German, for want of any English example. His "Observations on the Language of Chaucer" are the most valuable contribution to the study of that author since Tyrwhitt published his edition of the "Canterbury Tales." It is an index to every variation of form, whether of grammar or prosody, that occurs in the "Canterbury Tales," made with a full knowledge of all the gains of recent philological science, and with the conscientious caution of a true scholar. While it goes far toward establishing the theoretic probability of regularity in the Chaucerian system of verse, it shows also how many obstacles are to be removed by careful collation of manuscript texts before any indisputable law can be established. We hope to see it published in a more convenient and accessible form, and we cannot but wish that Professor Child might edit the works of an author for whose appreciation he has done so much, and to whom no living man is so competent to do justice as himself.